

Exit Level Scoring Guide for Reading and Written Composition

Fall 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The reading and written composition sections of the TAKS English language arts test are based on three thematically linked reading pieces, called a “triplet”—a literary selection, an expository selection, and a visual representation. The test includes two performance tasks: three short answer reading items and a written composition. The literary and expository selections are published pieces, and the visual representation is a created piece, although it may include some published elements, such as photographs. Using published selections on TAKS makes the assessment more authentic and, therefore, a more valid and reliable measure of student learning in reading at the high school level.

Short Answer Items

The three short answer items on each test assess two skills. First, students must be able to generate clear, reasonable, thoughtful ideas or analyses about some aspect of the published literary and expository selections. Second, students must be able to support these ideas or analyses with relevant, strongly connected textual evidence.

On each test one short answer item is based on the literary selection only (Objective 2), one is based on the expository selection only (Objective 3), and one is based on students’ ability to connect the literary and expository selections (also Objective 3). Short answer items are not used to measure Objective 1, since this objective focuses on basic understanding.

Objective 2

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the effects of literary elements and techniques in culturally diverse written texts.

To appreciate the literature they read in high school, students must develop an understanding of the literary elements that are at the heart of all stories. This understanding must go beyond mere identification to encompass the ways in which the parts of a story, singly and in combination, contribute to its overall meaning. Students must also understand the ways in which an author uses literary techniques and language to craft a story. In short answer items assessing Objective 2, students must write a short response analyzing how literary elements, literary techniques, or figurative language function in a story.

Objective 3

The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate culturally diverse written texts and visual representations.

To read well at the high school level, students must go beyond their initial understanding or impressions of a selection. Students must be able to develop their own interpretations, make thoughtful judgments about what they read, examine how a selection relates to their own lives, and find meaningful connections across parts of a single selection or between two selections. Students must also be aware of the way an author crafts a selection. An author’s purpose for writing, organizational decisions, point of view or attitude toward the subject, and unique use of language all affect the way a reader reads and understands a selection. In short answer items assessing Objective 3, students must write a short response analyzing or evaluating some aspect of the expository selection or some aspect of text common to or based upon both selections.

TAKS short answer items are holistically scored on a scale of 0 (insufficient) to 3 (exemplary). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student responses with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand not only your students’ reading development but also the strengths and weaknesses of your school’s reading program.

Written Composition

Writing is a life skill. As students move from grade to grade, writing skills are critical for academic progress. Students who have difficulty putting their thoughts into writing struggle to succeed in social studies, science, and many areas other than English language arts. Because good writing requires good thinking, the act of writing helps students learn to clarify their thoughts and focus their ideas.

The writing prompt is thematically linked to the three reading selections. In this way, students have a built-in context that they may draw from as they plan their compositions. Note, however, that while students may include an analysis or reference to one or more reading selections, this is not a requirement. Students may respond to the prompt in any way they choose.

The composition section of the TAKS English language arts test assesses the knowledge and skills grouped under Objectives 4 and 5. Objective 4 focuses on the quality of the composition's content, while Objective 5 focuses on how clearly and effectively the student communicates his or her ideas. These objectives are inextricably linked because good writing must be both substantial and mechanically sound.

Objective 4

The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.

The ability to communicate thoughts and ideas through writing helps students become successful, not only in school but throughout their lives. In order to communicate effectively, students must organize and develop ideas in a logical, coherent, and interesting manner that is easy for the reader to follow and understand. Objective 4 tests each student's ability to produce an organized and well-developed composition in response to a prompt. The prompt is worded so that students have broad latitude in crafting an individual response. Students can use any organizational strategy that allows them to write an effective piece—they can write a story, a description, a philosophical piece, an expository piece, a response to reading—or they can combine approaches. However students choose to respond, it is important that the composition they write is uniquely theirs—that it is authentic and represents their best thinking and writing.

Objective 5

The student will produce a piece of writing that demonstrates a command of the conventions of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

To write well, students must be able to apply the conventions of the English language. First, when students write a composition, they are able to follow the rules of correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence structure. Second, they are able to write effective sentences and use words and phrases that enhance the reader's understanding of their ideas. Although students are not expected to produce absolutely error-free writing on the test, they are expected to write as clearly and correctly as possible. The stronger the writing conventions are, the more likely it is that students will be able to produce an effective composition.

TAKS compositions are holistically scored on a scale of 1 (ineffective) to 4 (highly effective). For each score point, this scoring guide presents the rubric as well as four student compositions with explanatory annotations. Using this scoring guide will help you to better understand your students' writing development and the strengths and weaknesses of your school's writing program.

Amir

by Paul Fleischman

1 In India we have many vast cities, just as in America. There, too, you are one among millions. But there at least you know your neighbors. Here, one cannot say that. The object in America is to avoid contact, to treat all as foes unless they're known to be friends. Here you have a million crabs living in a million crevices.

My notes about what I am
reading

2 When I saw the garden for the first time, so green among the dark brick buildings, I thought back to my parents' Persian rug. It showed climbing vines, rivers and waterfalls, grapes, flower beds, singing birds, everything a desert dweller might dream of. Those rugs were indeed portable gardens. In the summers in Delhi, so very hot, my sisters and I would lie upon it and try to press ourselves into its world. The garden's green was as soothing to the eye as the deep blue of that rug. I'm aware of color. I manage a fabric store. But the garden's greatest benefit, I feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors.

3 I grew eggplants, onions, carrots, and cauliflower. When the eggplants appeared in August they were pale purple, a strange and eerie shade. When my wife would bring our little son, he was forever wanting to pick them. There was nothing else in the garden with that color. Very many people came over to ask about them and talk to me. I recognized a few from the neighborhood. Not one had spoken to me before—and now how friendly they turned out to be. The eggplants gave them an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation. How happy they seemed to have found this excuse, to let their natural friendliness out.

4 Those conversations tied us together. In the middle of summer someone dumped a load of tires on the garden at night, as if it were still filled with trash. A man's four rows of young corn were crushed. In an hour, we had all the tires by the curb. We were used to helping each other by then. A few weeks later, early in the evening a woman screamed, down the block from the garden. A man with a knife had taken her purse. Three men from the garden ran after him.

I was surprised that I was one of them. Even more surprising, we caught him. Royce held the man to a wall with his pitchfork until the police arrived. I asked the others. Not one of us had ever chased a criminal before. And most likely we wouldn't have except near the garden. There, you felt part of a community.

5 I came to the United States in 1980. Cleveland is a city of immigrants. The Poles are especially well known here. I'd always heard that the Polish men were tough steelworkers and that the women cooked lots of cabbage. But I'd never known one—until the garden. She was an old woman whose space bordered mine. She had a seven-block walk to the garden, the same route I took. We spoke quite often. We both planted carrots. When her hundreds of seedlings came up in a row, I was very surprised that she did not thin them—pulling out all but one healthy-looking plant each few inches, to give them room to grow. I asked her. She looked down at them and said she knew she ought to do it, but that this task reminded her too closely of her concentration camp, where the prisoners were inspected each morning and divided into two lines—the healthy to live and the others to die. Her father, an orchestra violinist, had spoken out against the Germans, which had caused her family's arrest. When I heard her words, I realized how useless was all that I'd heard about Poles, how much richness it hid, like the worthless shell around an almond. I still do not know, or care, whether she cooks cabbage.

6 The garden found this out with Royce. He was young and black. He looked rather dangerous. People watched him and seemed to be relieved when he left the garden. Then he began spending more time there. We found out that he had a stutter. Then that he had two sisters, that he liked the cats that roamed the garden, and that he worked very well with his hands. Soon all the mothers were trying to feed him. How very strange it was to watch people who would have crossed the street if they'd seen him coming a few weeks before, now giving him vegetables, more than he could eat. In return, he watered for people who were sick and fixed fences and made other repairs. He might weed your garden or use the bricks from the building that was torn down up the block to make you a brick path between your rows. He always pretended he hadn't done it. It was always a surprise. One felt honored to be chosen. He was trusted and liked—and famous, after his exploit with the pitchfork. He was not a black teenage boy. He was Royce.

- 7 In September he and a Mexican man collected many bricks from up the street and built a big barbecue. I was in the garden on Saturday when the Mexican family drove up in a truck with a dead pig in the back. They built a fire, put a heavy metal spit through the pig, and began to roast it. A bit later their friends began arriving. One brought a guitar, another played violin. They filled a folding table with food. Perhaps it was one of their birthdays, or perhaps no reason was needed for the party. It was beautiful weather, sunny but not hot. Fall was just beginning and the garden was changing from green to brown. Those of us who had come to work felt the party's spirit enter us. The smell of the roasting pig drifted out and called to everyone, gardeners or not. Soon the entire garden was filled.
- 8 It was a harvest festival, like those in India, though no one had planned it to be. People brought food and drinks and drums. I went home to get my wife and son. Watermelons from the garden were sliced open. The gardeners proudly showed off what they'd grown. We traded harvests, as we often did. And we gave food away, as we often did also—even I, a businessman, trained to give away nothing, to always make a profit. The garden provided many excuses for breaking that particular rule.
- 9 Many people spoke to me that day. Several asked where I was from. I wondered if they knew as little about Indians as I had known about Poles. One old woman, Italian I believe, said she'd admired my eggplants for weeks and told me how happy she was to meet me. She praised them and told me how to cook them and asked all about my family. But something bothered me. Then I remembered. A year before she'd claimed that she'd received the wrong change in my store. I was called out to the register. She'd gotten quite angry and called me—despite her own accent—a dirty foreigner. Now that we were so friendly with each other I dared to remind her of this. Her eyes became huge. She apologized to me over and over again. She kept saying, "Back then, I didn't know it was *you* . . ."

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Long Road Home

by Lois Raimondo

Page 1

1 Late at night I sit in my apartment in Washington, D.C., watching U.S. leaders talk on television about the war on terrorism. Afghanistan moves in and out of these conversations, as it does with the headlines. One day there's a lethal flare-up in a mountain stronghold. Later the situation is "controlled," and newsroom pundits move on to other hot spots like Iran, Kashmir, or Somalia. Then my phone rings. The call is from Afghanistan.

2 It's my former translator, Ahmad Zia Masud, now a negotiator for Afghanistan's hastily formed Ministry of Defense. He calls me often by satellite phone from mountaintops, villages, and caves where he is meeting with resisters to reform—Taliban fighters, independent warlords—who, after decades of war, are reluctant or unwilling to lay down their guns. Sometimes Masud and other negotiators are threatened and forced to retreat. Soldiers then move in, and the hills resound once more with war.

3 "This is a very dangerous time for my country," Masud tells me. "Every day I see disaster. The young boys, they know only war, nothing else. What will happen to them? I believe food will come, factories will come, but now the people are suffering. Even if peace comes, so much has died."

4 From last October into December, Masud and I worked together day and night in the parched hills and plains of northern Afghanistan, where I was on assignment as a photojournalist for *The Washington Post*. Masud was in his eighth

year of forced exile from his home in Taliban-controlled Kabul, working mostly for Northern Alliance leadership. When hundreds of foreign journalists began descending into Khodja Bahauddin, site of the Northern Alliance's government headquarters, the foreign ministry assembled an army of translators. Masud, with halting English but well connected, wound up with me.

5 He is a devout Muslim and father of three; I an unveiled, single Western woman. Neither of us imagined how our minds and lives would mingle—and be forever changed.

6 From the start we covered frontline stories, which required a steady diet of Russian military maps, bareback rides on mountain-bred horses across frigid rivers, a phone book filled with satellite numbers for field commanders, and a stomach for black tea. Some days mortar fire thundered constantly. Other days were still. The United States had announced that it would launch air strikes on Taliban positions, but the Northern Alliance frontline commanders we were meeting with weren't being told when. So they held their men in check, awaiting the U.S. campaign that would allow them to take the offensive against weakened Taliban territory. This lull created space to report beyond the front lines, to provide social and historical background for the conflict. Camera in hand, I set out to document the "collateral" consequences of the war. From

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dawn to dark Masud and I bounced around in a Russian jeep to find Afghan people and their stories. Along the way, sharing hundreds of miles, our own stories unfolded.

7 Educated at Kabul University, Masud was still a consummate student at age 32. He carried a small, lined notebook in his chest pocket, which he filled each working day with new English words. (Once when we were under fire he yelled, "Make yourself small!" "You mean scrunch down?" I shouted back. "Scrunch" made its way into his book.) He has immense curiosity. Yet Masud had chosen to avoid all contact with Western cultures abroad and instead became a religious-political activist, nurturing strict devotion to Islam among his people. My own curiosity had led me to spend more than a decade living in remote corners of China, India, and Tibet—none so ravaged as Afghanistan.

8 Day after day Masud interpreted his war-torn world for me. I photographed young students, hungry for knowledge, whose schools had been commandeered by Taliban troops and turned into garbage-strewn military barracks. We met families, three generations deep, displaced to bare-bones refugee camps. We found fragmented lives—scattered to hospitals, cemeteries, and prisons.

9 Such suffering failed to dim Masud's sense of hope. That hope was rooted in a deep devotion to God, which I learned through his long, joyful renditions of Koranic stories. Our trips by jeep or horseback were punctuated each day by sunset prayer, even when shells were flying. Despite the constant threat of

danger and death, Masud and other Afghans I met strove for normalcy in their lives. Imposing the rhythms of religion, they transformed one more day of war into one more night of peace. We'd break Ramadan fast at sunset with still-warm bread made with prayerful hands in an outdoor clay oven—soldiers, civilians, and one foreigner seated on the ground, a complex human circle bound by simple bread. The teachings of Islam seemed to temper potential violence in a poor and desperate people. Yet taken to fundamentalist extremes, that same faith was also motivating Taliban fighters just over the next hill, who wanted to kill, certainly me, but also their Muslim brothers. Masud was more of a brother than most. He, like most Taliban, is ethnically Pashtun, one of the few working with the Northern Alliance.



One day we visited Lalaguzar, a sprawling refugee camp near Khodja. Weeks earlier I had watched a boy there toss a tiny ball made of plastic wrapped

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with twine. The sand-colored ball was constantly disappearing or unwinding. Later, in a far-off town, I bought a soccer ball. Masud and I returned to Lalaguzar and wandered through miles of indistinguishable tents, looking for the boy. Giggling children, all hungry for play, crowded around. As I offered a kicking lesson, some women peeked at us from behind a tent. Masud kicked the ball, and one of the women kicked it back. "Oh, no," said Masud, only half-joking. "Maybe her husband will kill me. I played soccer with his wife."

11 That afternoon we returned to Khodja and sat with tea on the concrete stoop outside my room. Masud poured the tea, then abruptly confessed that he felt conflicted in my presence. "It is a sin to be with you, talking friendly in this way," he said. "I must pray very hard every night after leaving you."

12 I wasn't ready for this. We had been working together, almost every day, for weeks. "You are saying I am a sin?"

13 "Yes. A man must not speak friendly with a woman who is not his wife. I love my wife very much. We have rules. You are not Muslim. But this is not the main thing. It is dangerous. You should be covered." I instinctively tightened my scarf around my head. "The people of Afghanistan do not want you here."

14 "I see." I stayed calm but was inwardly stunned because, until then, I had thought we understood each other and communicated in ways that were, at times, extraordinary. Now I was a sin.

He went on. "Nobody wants foreigners here. I hate America. In too many ways, I hate America."

His words sank into silence. We had already discussed what we both viewed as the rampant materialism of U.S. culture. Masud believed that American peacetime society, rife with crime, was the inevitable consequence of spiritual bankruptcy. He feared that Americans in Afghanistan—soldiers, journalists, businessmen, even peacekeepers—would carry with them these same cultural values. I could see, and agree with, some of what he said. Now my Afghan translator, who was becoming my friend, seemed to equate me with an enemy. I was a sin from a nation he loathed.

Tears welling up, I surrendered. "Okay, I understand." Then I looked up and saw tears coursing down his face. "Masud, why are you crying?" "I cry because I have hurt you," he said. "Speaking with you is a small sin; this is a big sin. The heart is a holy place, and we must always take care to never hurt one another. I am sorry. Now I must leave." He rose to his feet, planning to resign as my translator. We were both off balance, but I wanted him to stay. "Wait. Please. You will be part of Afghanistan's new government. Contact with the West is now inevitable. You will have to deal with foreigners, if for no other reason than to protect what you feel is precious about Islam and Afghan culture. You can be both bridge and gatekeeper for your people."

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18 The optimist and the fundamentalist were tangled in a web. In the end Masud chose to stay. He was beginning to trust me, and that troubled him. Because I was not Muslim, he had assumed I would never understand his world. Yet my work had taken us together into the raw lives of strangers, giving us common ground where we could challenge each other's thinking. He entered new words in his notebook that night—"flexibility" and "cultural relativity," ideas we discussed at length. We then retired to our separate quarters for exhausted sleep.

19 A month later, the time had come for me to leave. It was snowing. Masud had come to say good-bye. "How do I say good-bye to you?" I said. He struggled to reply. "You have been my closest friend. You have taught me 'flexible' and 'complicated.' I am a different man because of you." He paused. "I can no longer hate America, because you are there." He gave me gifts for my nephews, three small vests of leather and fur. Then he put his hand over his heart, and we parted.

20 Masud worked his way south over snowy mountains to Kabul, where he was reunited with his family, briefly, before being called upon to help secure remote hostile regions of the country. When he phones me now, he tells me of the "total devastation of buildings, land, and people's minds." He worries that aid from the U.S. and other foreign powers will degrade his culture. He cringes when new Afghan leaders who have lived most of their lives abroad talk of a "new Afghanistan" and "globalization." I've never heard him sound so tired, or so sad.

"These people do not know my country. What must we call this? 'Cultural relativity'? Remember our time with that word?" he laughs quietly. "We are a very religious people. Our ideas are very different. I am afraid for Afghanistan. These are the things you must write about. Otherwise, your words will have no soul." I ask if I can also tell our story. "If it can help the world know there is beauty and peace in Islam, then you must tell it," he said.

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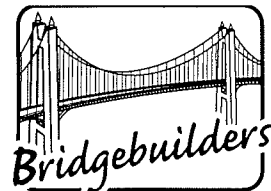
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It's a Small World. Come Meet Your Neighbors.



Texas is home to people from all over the world, yet many of us don't even know who lives next door. Join Bridgebuilders and meet people from every part of the globe. Every Thursday night Bridgebuilders hosts a dinner at the Killeen Community Center. We spotlight a country, and everyone

prepares and brings a dish from that country's native cuisine. Over good food and laughter, we get beyond the surface and learn a lot about the people around us—and ourselves.



**Join us this Thursday at 7 P.M.
Spotlighted Country: Syria**

**You'll be glad
you came!**

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SHORT ANSWER ITEMS

Rubrics and Sample Responses

Objective 2 – Literary Selection

In “Amir,” what does the garden symbolize? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may offer an incorrect theme, character trait, conflict, or change
- ☐ may offer a theme, character, conflict, or change that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze a literary technique or figurative expression
- ☐ may offer an analysis that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may present only a plot summary
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-1

In the story Amir the garden represents many things about india it's people and it's make up. This story symbolizes the whole country and the people who live there and how close they are together. It shows in the story how close they are and how everyone works in the garden together.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student incorrectly analyzes the literary technique. The idea that the garden symbolizes India (the garden represents many things about India its people and its makeup) indicates that the student does not understand the symbolic meaning of the garden in this selection.

RG-2

that the garden was A a peaceful place that nothing, unusual ever happened from the story he said "Never one of us chased a criminal before, and most likely not near the garden."

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student does not address the question that was asked. The student describes the setting of the garden (the garden was a peaceful place) but not what it symbolizes. The student offers text, but it is unclear what idea the text is meant to support.

In the story "Amir" the garden symbolizes that every thing in the garden are just like people. The garden is the world and that our life is much like a garden.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

The student presents an analysis (everything in the garden are just like people; life is much like a garden) that is too vague to determine if it is reasonable and offers no textual evidence for support.

It showed climbing vines, rivers, + waterfalls, grapes, flowerbeds, singing birds, everything a desert dweller might dream of. It made him + his sisters lie upon it + try to press themselves into the world.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response no analysis is provided. The text, which refers to the Persian rug rather than the garden, is irrelevant.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression but provide only general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea or analysis and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea or analysis
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without providing an idea or analysis

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-5

In "Amrit" I feel that the garden symbolizes the way things are to be seen, as more than it meets the eye. "But the garden's greatest benefit, I feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors." This selection from the story symbolizes the importance / greatness of the garden's purpose.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student presents only a general idea (the garden symbolizes the way things are to be seen). The text offered (the garden's greatest benefit was...to make our eyes see our neighbors), seems related to the idea but does not help clarify the student's meaning. Because the response is not clear and specific, it is only partially sufficient.

RG-6

The garden symbolizes unity. B/c when the "garden" was established in this community that's what it truly became a community. There was no separation b/w neighbors when it came to that place. The narrator spoke of all the togetherness that took place behind the garden. So the garden simply symbolizes unity.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student offers the reasonable idea that the garden symbolizes unity. However, the student provides only further explanation of the analysis and no textual evidence.

The garden symbolizes a serene place where the people of the community gets to know each other. In the passage, paragraph 8 reveals evidence through the quote, "The Garden provided many excuses for breaking that particular rule."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

The student offers a reasonable idea of the garden's symbolism (where people of the community get to know each other). However, the textual evidence provided (the garden provided many excuses for breaking that particular rule) does not directly support the community members getting to know each other. This results in a weak connection between the idea and the text evidence, causing this response to be partially sufficient.

In "Amir", the garden resembles a place of tranquility and connection among different cultures. This symbolism is shown when the author and his neighbor are communicating, and when Royce goes around and helps everyone in the garden.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable idea (the garden resembles a place of tranquility and connection among different cultures) but provides only general text references (the author and his neighbor are communicating, Royce goes around and helps everyone) rather than specific textual evidence.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a reasonable theme, character trait, conflict, or change and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

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RG-9

In "Amir" the garden represents a community. This particular community helps out each other. Like when Royce, the author, and another guy catch the criminal, then Royce gets food from all of the other neighbors. Another way they help out is when somebody dumps the tires on one man's four rows of corn, everybody comes and it takes them only one hour to move all of the tires.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student offers the reasonable and specific idea that the garden symbolizes a community that helps each other out. This idea is supported with a clear and specific synopsis of how the characters come together to help one another.

RG-10

In Amir The garden symbolizes unity and begins friendships. In paragraph 3, the author states, "The egg plants gave me an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation which led their natural friendliness out. The garden starts conversations which starts unity."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable and specific idea that has two parts (the garden symbolizes unity and begins friendships). The specific, relevant textual evidence given (The eggplants gave me an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation which led their natural friendliness out) illustrates both the formation of unity and friendships. The student further clarifies the way in which unity is formed in the final statement (The garden starts conversations which start unity).

In "Amir" by Paul Fleischman, the garden symbolizes the bond that developed between the neighbors in the community. "[The] garden's greatest benefit, I (Paul) feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors." The neighbors found the garden as an "excuse, to let their natural friendliness out," which ultimately "tied [them] (the neighbors) together."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

This student presents the reasonable and specific idea that the garden symbolizes the bond that developed between the neighbors in the community. The student then presents two relevant, accurate quotes that combine to illustrate the formation of that bond and the garden's role in it.

In "Amir" by Paul Fleischman the garden symbolizes a place that brings a community together. Many people did not talk to one another "unless they're known as friends." The garden's eggplants helped bring out the friendliness in people, it "gave them an excuse for starting a conversation." Those conversations started the beginning of a newfound neighborhood. The greatest benefit of the garden "was not the relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

This student presents a reasonable idea of what the garden symbolizes (a place that brings a community together). The student then provides a combination of synopsis and text quotations to illustrate the community being separate and its coming together. The student further clarifies the main idea (Those conversations started the beginning of a newfound neighborhood) and supports it with additional relevant text to create a clear and specific response.

READING RUBRIC—LITERARY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 2

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful theme, character trait, conflict, or change and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis of a literary technique or figurative expression and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses must demonstrate the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea or analysis.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 2 – Literary Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-13

In "Amir," the garden symbolizes a place where stereotypes and prejudices are lost. Despite the ideas Amir has about Polish women, when he talks to the "old woman" he "realizes how useless was all that [he'd] heard about Poles." After getting to know the women through talk of the garden, Amir did "not know, or care, whether she" cooked cabbage, a stereotype he had once held. People who had once had notions about Amir such as the "old Italian woman" admired his eggplants and conversed together. Only a year before this woman had called Amir "a dirty foreigner." The garden is everyone's common boundary ground where stereotypes are thrown out the door.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student presents a particularly insightful analysis about what the garden symbolizes (a place where stereotypes and prejudices are lost). The student effectively demonstrates depth of understanding by integrating the analysis with meaningful, relevant textual support.

RG-14

In the story, "Amir," the garden represents a catalyst that sets off a reaction to create bonds between the people working there. The author describes how "not one [of his neighbors] had spoken to [him] before." Therefore, he was shocked when people began to open up after noticing his growing eggplants. "The eggplants gave them an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation." Without the eggplants growing in the garden, Amir's neighbors may have continued to be cold and distant. However, as the neighborhood began to work together in the garden, it wasn't long before they "felt part of a community." The garden symbolizes a catalyst in that it created a common ground between the neighbors through which they were tied together.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student offers a thorough analysis, explaining how the garden is the catalyst for and therefore symbolic of the bond between neighbors by giving them common ground to come together. This insightful analysis is strengthened by clear and specific textual support that reflects an in-depth understanding of the selection.

In "Amir", the garden symbolizes an escape from the normal life in America. The people of America "try to avoid contact", and the rule of thumb is "to treat all as foes unless they're known as friends." For the people in "Amir", the garden gave them a chance to "break" the rules. As with Royce, "people who would have crossed the street if they'd seen him coming a few weeks before" now gave him more vegetables than he could eat. The garden gave them an opportunity to "make the eyes see our neighbors."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student presents a very insightful and unique analysis (the garden symbolizes an escape from the normal life in America). The student then further explains the analysis, interweaving particularly effective textual support illustrating both the normal American life as well as the escape the garden provided.

In "Amir," the garden symbolizes unity. In the garden they grow all kinds of plants. The narrator describes how he grew "eggplants, onions, carrots and cauliflower." In the same way that the differing vegetables grow together, the differing community is able to grow together in unity. Through the Mexican harvest festival, the reader can see that the garden gives them an excuse to come together. Neighbors even went so far as to "give food away" and the narrator shares that "the garden provided many excuses" for such activity. As people took more and more interest in the garden bonds were forged. Overall the garden brought unity to the community and gave neighbors a chance to "let their natural friendliness out."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student presents the thoughtful analysis that the garden symbolizes unity. The student clarifies the analysis by comparing the community coming together to a garden growing (In the same way that the differing vegetables grow together, the differing community is able to grow together in unity). This analogy is then skillfully supported by an interweaving of further analysis, direct quotations, and specific synopsis, making this an exemplary response.

Objective 3 – Expository Selection

How would you describe the relationship between Masud and the author of “Long Road Home”? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the text
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of the text
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-17

Their relationship is based on their point of view's. They seem to understand what they are going through despite their differences in values. Masud thinks American values can infect with his own, and his people.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response is too vague to determine if it is reasonable.

RG-18

"My phone rings It's my former translator, Ahmad zia masud." The author and masud have probably known each other for a while. Since masud was her translator.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student's description (The author and Masud have probably known each other for a while) is too general to determine if it is reasonable. The student goes on to identify Masud as the author's translator, but this fact is presented as proof of the assertion that they have known each other for a while, not as a description of the relationship. The text quoted does not clarify the analysis and is not direct, relevant textual evidence.

the relationship between masud and the author of "long Road Home" is kind of similar because they both don't like the whole fact of war and the people are suffering cause their love ones are dying.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response indicates a misunderstanding of the question. The student's description of the relationship is not reasonable because it refers only to the characters' similar points of view rather than to the relationship between them.

The lesson that the author and Masud learns is important, because we always look to the outside of people and never look to the inside of people. Masud says "Every day I see disaster" He thinks that America is the same. He can't believe that there is peace and not conflicts in the world.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response does not address the question asked. It attempts to describe a lesson the author and Masud learn rather than describing the relationship between them. The textual evidence presented is not relevant text because it is used to support the importance of the lesson rather than the relationship between the characters.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence or provide no textual evidence at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation and may provide textual evidence, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-21

I believe that Maud and the author had a very deep relationship that they themselves could not explain. Masud committed a sin by talking to the author. He hated Americans but yet he didn't hate her. Later he trusted her and he learned that America was not such a bad country after all. Their relationship changed their lives.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student reasonably describes the relationship (Masud and the author had a very deep relationship that they themselves could not explain). However, the student makes only general references to the text rather than supporting the analysis with specific textual evidence.

RG-22

I would describe the two as two representatives of different cultures, learning how each one works, as well as teaching about their own in the process. The two friends show this behavior in the passage when one states, "He carried a small, lined in his chest pocket, which he filled with new English words."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

This student presents a reasonable description of the relationship (two representatives of different cultures, learning how each one works, as well as teaching about their own in the process). However, the textual evidence offered shows only that Masud learned some English words. Since the quote does not support both the author and Masud learning and teaching each other about their cultures, it is only weakly connected to the idea.

I would describe their relationship as a special one. They were brought together under the worst of circumstances. And out of pure necessity, needed to build both a professional and personal relationship. Even though Masud hates American values, he still cares for the American photojournalist.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student offers several reasonable descriptions of the relationship but provides no textual evidence.

At first their relationship was ok but then they started arguing and everything was going wrong with Masud and the author of "Long Road Home". Masud wanted an other author because of the argument they had. But later on they said sorry to each other and everything was going just like it was.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

This response offers a reasonable but general description of how the relationship goes from okay to worse but then improves again in the end. The student attempts to support this description but uses only general text reference rather than specific textual support.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the selection and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, sufficient responses must be clear and specific.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-25

The relationship between Masud and the author, I feel, is best described as one of very different people who become best friends. The author states "He is a devout Muslim and father of three; I an unveiled, single western woman. Neither of us imagined how our minds and lives would mingle — and be forever changed." They are very different but come an understanding of each other.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student offers the reasonable and specific analysis that the relationship is one of very different people becoming best friends. Specific, relevant textual evidence is presented to support both the differences between Masud and the author (He is a devout Muslim...I an unveiled, single Western woman) and the friendship that formed (Neither of us imagined how our minds and lives would mingle—and be forever changed).

RG-26

The relationship between the author and Masud grew closer as the story went on. Though the author wasn't Muslim, Masud and her overcame their differences. "Because I wasn't Muslim, he had assumed I would never understand his world. Yet my work had taken us together into the raw lives of strangers, giving us common ground where we could challenge each other's thinking."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable, specific description of the relationship (The relationship between the author and Masud grew closer as the story went on). The textual support given focuses on the author's perspective but clearly and directly supports the process of growing and becoming closer.

The relationship between Masud and the author was one of powerful friendship that couldn't be broken. At first they had major problems mainly because of ethnicities. Masud said, "Nobody wants foreigners here. I hate America. In too many ways, I hate America." He didn't like Americans either. In the end, however, he said he couldn't hate America because now the author was there. If that doesn't show a strong relationship through friendship, then I don't know what does.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student focuses on the relationship from Masud's point of view. The student reasonably and clearly describes the relationship as Masud overcoming ethnic differences to form a powerful friendship with the author and provides clear and specific textual evidence for both the initial conflict and the subsequent friendship. The last sentence of the response is unnecessary, but since it does not introduce a new idea that would need to be supported with text, the score of the response is not affected.

I think Masud and the author formed a strong friendship, despite their differences, that left them forever changed. "Neither of us imagined how our minds and lives would mingle – and be forever changed," the author mentions at the beginning of the story. When they are saying goodbye, Masud tells her, "You have been my closest friend... I am a different man because of you."

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student presents a reasonable and specific description of the relationship (Masud and the author formed a strong friendship, despite their differences, that left them forever changed). The student uses relevant textual evidence to directly support this idea.

READING RUBRIC—EXPOSITORY SELECTION

OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of the text and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence

In addition, exemplary responses show strong evidence of the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-29

This relationship can be deemed a strong friendship, although an unlikely one. Even though they are not of the same religion and ethnicity or even share the same beliefs, they are connected by caring about the troubles of the Afghanistan people. Masud is speaking for his country by claiming "The people of Afghanistan do not want you here," yet subconsciously, he is deeply connected to her. Masud "cries" because [he has] hurt [the author]" and further continues that "the heart is a holy place" even though she is not Muslim, "we must always take care to never hurt one another." Masud comes to the realization that the author had all along, that despite their cultural differences, they "communicated in ways that were, at times extraordinary."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student offers a thoughtful description of the relationship as a strong but unlikely friendship. The student further expands upon this idea with insightful analysis (yet subconsciously, he is deeply connected to her; Masud comes to the realization that the author had all along) combined with strong textual evidence in the form of direct quotes.

RG-30

The relationship between Masud and the author is deep and lasting even though it is a connection formed between two completely opposite people, "a devout Muslim and an unveiled, single western woman". Though seemingly impossible, share a experience and harsh conditions forge a bond stronger than cultural differences, "a complex human circle bound by simple bread". Even when Masud is conflicted about their friendship he still cares about the author, "speaking with you is a small sin; [hurting you] is a big sin". Masud had "assumed she would never understand his world" but they had "common ground where [they] would challenge each other's thinking". At their parting, Masud says to her "I am a different man because of you."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

The student skillfully combines specific textual evidence with an insightful understanding of the relationship between the author and Masud (deep and lasting; seemingly impossible; conflicted) to create a particularly thoughtful response.

The relationship between Masud and the author is a dynamic one that changes over time. At first, they are only professionals working together on a job: one, a "devout Muslim and father" and the other, an "unveiled, single Western woman." However, as they learn to break the cultural barriers between them, they come to respect each other "on common ground where [they] can challenge each other's thinking." When it comes time to say good-bye, they part as "closest friends," bound together by a friendship that transcends prejudice.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this exemplary response the student presents an insightful description of a friendship that is formed over time by breaking cultural barriers, transcending prejudice, and developing mutual respect. The description is strongly and concisely supported with relevant textual evidence.

The relationship between Masud and the author is one of both amity and animosity. Although they are the "closest [of] friend[s]," Masud and the author are conflicted by their cultural differences. At first, Masud feels that he should "hate America" because of the bad influence "contact with the West" will have on Afghanistan. However, the author encourages him to "be both bridge and gatekeeper for [his] people," enabling them to maintain their Islamic culture and to relieve the tensions between Afghans and Americans. Because of the friendship he has formed with the author, Masud "no longer hate[s] America," bridging the gap between two very different worlds.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this response the student offers an insightful and unique description of the dual nature of the relationship (The relationship between Masud and the author is one of both amity and animosity). The student provides specific, strongly linked textual support for both the conflict and the friendship.

Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

How is the concept of accepting others important in both “Amir” and “Long Road Home”? Support your answer with evidence from **both** selections.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 0 — INSUFFICIENT

In **insufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not based on the selections
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that does not address the question
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is not reasonable
- ☐ may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, or make a prediction that is too general or vague to determine whether it is reasonable
- ☐ may incorrectly analyze or evaluate a characteristic of text based on both selections
- ☐ may not address the question in any way or may answer a different question than the one asked
- ☐ may offer only incomplete or irrelevant textual evidence from one or both selections

In addition, insufficient responses may lack clarity.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 0 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-33

You have to accept other whether they are of your religion or even the same race because you work with them and in society you have to deal with them. Like in *Amir*, the woman at the end is encountered again with him and is very sorry. She accepts him now since she's talked to him before.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student offers an analysis (You have to accept others whether they are of your religion or even the same race because you work with them and in society you have to deal with them) that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable for either selection. The student provides some clarification of the idea with respect to “Amir” but fails to make the analysis specific to “Long Road Home.”

Acception is something we
all should learn. In "Amir" it brought trust and
appreceation. In "Long Road Home", it brought faith
and hope to a long journey. It will open our
eyes to a hole nother world beyond what our minds
can comprehend, but our hearts can understand.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

This response lacks clarity. The first idea of how acceptance is important (in "Amir" it brought trust and appreciation) is too general. The second idea (In "Long Road Home" it brought faith and hope to a long journey) is not reasonable based on the selection. The student then adds unclear analysis that is not specific to either selection.

It is important in that it makes things easier
for everybody. In Amir, after they accepted each other
it wasn't as hard for them to go to each others
houses and talk. In Long Road Home, it made it easy
for both of them to cry at the end together.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student offers an idea (It is important in that it makes things easier for everybody) that is too general for “Amir” and incorrect for “Long Road Home.” The student attempts to support this idea with text that is not present in the selection “Amir” and is inaccurate for the selection “Long Road Home.”

The concept of accepting others is important from these two passages because stereotypes of people are almost all the time misleading. There are some Indians, Polish, Afghanistans and more cultures who do fit the stereotype that has been put on them whether it be good or bad; and then there are those who do not fit the stereotype that has been put on them.

Score Point: 0 – Insufficient

In this response the student offers an analysis (accepting others is important from these two passages because stereotypes of people are almost all the time misleading) that is too vague to determine whether it is reasonable. The following attempt at explanation seems to contradict the analysis.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 1 — PARTIALLY SUFFICIENT

In **partially sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- ☐ may draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections that is supported only by general, incomplete, or partially accurate/relevant textual evidence from one or both selections
- ☐ may offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections but may offer textual support from only one selection or may offer no textual support at all
- ☐ may offer a reasonable idea, analysis, or evaluation based on both selections and may provide textual evidence from both selections, but this evidence is only weakly connected to the idea, analysis, or evaluation
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections but may draw a conclusion, offer an interpretation, make a prediction, or provide an analysis or evaluation based on only one selection
- ☐ may offer accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections without drawing a conclusion, offering an interpretation, making a prediction, or providing an analysis or evaluation

In addition, partially sufficient responses may be somewhat unclear or vague or may indicate that the student has difficulty making connections across selections.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 1 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-37

The importance of accepting those different from you is clear in both "Amir," and "Long Road Home." In "Amir," the openness and acceptance the garden breeds allows others to overcome prejudices and learn more about others around them. This sense of community empowers them and allows them to perform heroic tasks for one another that would, in another scenario, been absurd to hope for. In "Long Way Home," the characters are able to bridge a gap between cultures to promote peace, and to document the sufferings of an unappreciated people, such as the pictures of the school children.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

The student presents an insightful idea for each story. However, the student fails to offer relevant textual evidence for support.

The concept of accepting others is important in both "Amir" and "Long Road Home" because it unites people together to help them understand different ways of life. In "Amir" the garden brought neighbors closer together and the author described, "Those conversations tied us together." Also in "Long Road Home" the author explains to Masud that he will "have to deal with foreigners, if for no other reason than to protect what you feel..." "Diverse people can be bonded."

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

The student provides an analysis that is reasonable for both selections (it unites people together to help them understand different ways of life). For "Amir" the student provides textual support to show unity (Those conversations tied us together) but provides no textual evidence to support understanding different ways of life. For "Long Road Home" the textual evidence offered is only weakly connected to the ideas of unity and understanding.

The concept of accepting others is important in "Amir" and "Long Road Home" because both stories ^{try to} bring different backgrounds together to "help the world know there is beauty" (Zi-Rod home) in a foreign country and to make "[us] see our neighbors" (Amir-Z). Living in the same world, many ethnic problems bring us apart, and that is why accepting others can solve the problem of conflict between two nations.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student presents an analysis that is reasonable for both selections (accepting others is important...because both stories try to bring different backgrounds together). The analysis is expanded and supported with relevant text from both selections. However, in an attempt to provide a conclusion to the response, the student presents an additional analysis (accepting others can solve the problem of conflict between two nations) but makes no attempt to support the idea with textual evidence. Failure to support the additional analysis makes the response only partially sufficient.

The concept of accepting others is important in both the story "Amir" and "Long Road Home" because both discuss the union of cultures, and the value of building friendships despite differences. For example in the story "Amir," the author realizes that he had stereotyped Poles before he knew one and that he had been completely shallow, "When I heard her words, I realized how useless was all that I'd heard about Poles, how much richness it hid". Also in "Long road home, Ahmad and the author become friends, however Ahmad has to see past what he thinks of America before he accepts the American as his friend.

Score Point: 1 – Partially Sufficient

In this response the student provides an idea that is reasonable for both stories (because both discuss the union of cultures and the value of building friendships despite differences). The student offers a combination of specific synopsis and direct quotations to support the analysis for "Amir." However, for "Long Road Home" the student provides only general text references (Ahmad and the author became friends, Ahmad has to see past what he thinks of America) rather than specific textual evidence.

**READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3**

SCORE POINT 2 — SUFFICIENT

In **sufficient** responses, the student

- ☐ must draw a reasonable conclusion, offer a reasonable interpretation, or make a reasonable prediction based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
- ☐ must offer a reasonable analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and must support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, sufficient responses indicate that the student is able to make clear and specific connections across selections.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 2 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-41

In both "Amir" and "Long Road Home" the characters make connections with other cultures. In "Amir" the narrator realizes "how useless was all that [he'd] heard about the Poles, how much richness it hid". In "the Long Road Home" Masud accepts the American culture and is "a different man" he tells the author "[he] can no longer hate America because you are there". In both stories the characters are opened up to new cultures other than just their own, which gives them new positive characteristics.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

The student offers the reasonable interpretation that acceptance is important in both selections because it allows connections with other cultures. Specific, relevant textual evidence is provided for both selections (the narrator realizes how useless was all that he'd heard about Poles, Masud "is a different man" and "can no longer hate America"). The concluding sentence summarizes the response without introducing a new analytic point and does not need additional text support.

By accepting others, Amir gets a new perspective of America & learns a lot about other countries he knew little about. When Amir would converse with those around him, "those conversations tied [them] together," and make you feel "part of a community." Similarly, in "Long Road Home" when Masud accepted the author, he claimed he "can no longer hate America because [she] [is] there." When society accepts people who are different from them, a sense of unity and new perspectives are formed.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student presents an idea that is reasonable for both selections (When society accepts people who are different from them, a sense of unity and new perspectives are formed). The student provides clear and specific text support for both selections.

Both selections show the importance of accepting others. The author of "Long Road Home" states, "yet my work had taken us together into the raw lives of strangers, giving us common ground where we could challenge each other's thinking". This passage is a good example because she gained knowledge from her experience of accepting others. In "Amir", the garden brings different cultures together, "The eggplants gave them an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation. How happy they seemed to have found this excuse, to let their natural friendliness out". They all became happy when they accepted each other.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

In this response the student offers relevant textual evidence from "Long Road Home" to support the reasonable analysis that accepting others is important because it allows the author to gain knowledge. The student then presents the reasonable analysis that accepting others is important in "Amir" because it brings cultures together and makes people happy; clear and specific textual evidence is provided to support this analysis.

The concept of accepting others is important in both "Amir" and "Long Road Home" because it is the central theme in both short stories. Paul Fleischman wrote, "But the garden's greatest benefit, I feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors," to show his readers that the garden helped open the characters' eyes to other cultures, and Lois Hammond said, "neither of us imagined how our lives would mingle—and be forever changed," to emphasize that she and Masud overcame cultural differences to become friends.

Score Point: 2 – Sufficient

The student focuses on how the authors show the importance of acceptance in crafting their selections. For both "Amir" and "Long Road Home," the student identifies how the main themes of the selections address acceptance (the garden helped open the characters' eyes to other cultures; she and Masud overcame cultural differences to become friends). The student clarifies and supports this analysis by presenting specific textual evidence from both selections.

READING RUBRIC
LITERARY/EXPOSITORY CROSSOVER
OBJECTIVE 3

SCORE POINT 3 — EXEMPLARY

In **exemplary** responses, the student

- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful conclusion, interpretation, or prediction based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections
- ☐ must offer a particularly thoughtful or insightful analysis or evaluation of a characteristic of text based on both selections and strongly support it with accurate/relevant textual evidence from both selections

In addition, exemplary responses indicate that the student is able to make meaningful connections across selections. These responses show strong evidence of the student's depth of understanding and ability to effectively connect textual evidence to the idea, analysis, or evaluation.

Evidence may consist of a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or a specific synopsis.

Score Point 3 Guide Responses for Objective 3 – Literary/Expository Selection

TAKS Exit Level
Fall 2005

RG-45

In both Amir and Long Road Home, leaving to accept other cultures proves a very important part of life. In Amir the author learns that people need to step out of their comfort zone of stereotyping and "make the eyes see [yew] neighbors... and let the natural friendliness out". One needs to get past the outer shell of a person and learn what is inside. This idea relates to Long Road Home in the way that Masud assumes the author is a typical American but learns that by beginning to trust the enemy and understand their ways, "you can be both the bridge and gatekeeper for your people". By letting go of unfair assumptions, completely different cultures can help change each others lives.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

In this insightful response the student provides the analysis that letting go of unfair assumptions about other cultures is important in changing Amir's and Masud's lives. In the first selection the student uses concise and relevant textual evidence interwoven with thoughtful analysis to illustrate how Amir learns that stereotypes are comfort zones and people must go beyond them to create friendships. The student skillfully combines text from the second selection with analysis to illustrate Masud's process of overcoming his stereotypes of Americans, allowing him to be a better representative for his country and culture.

The idea of accepting others is conveyed in both excerpts. It is portrayed that stereotypes are not accurate sources when judging people. In "Amir" the narrator learns to care less whether "Polishmen are tough steel workers" or if "the women cooked a lot of cabbage." Instead, he began to learn about people, rather than their ancestors' history. Before long, the people were not simply part of a culture, but "part of the community." This integrated community came together to not only protect their garden but one another as well. Masud experienced the same thing. Although he believed that the American society was corrupt and the "inevitable consequence of spiritual bankruptcy," he opened up to and trusted an American. This enabled him to "enter new words into his notebook," develop a life-altering friendship, and claim he was "a changed man." If a moral was to be learned from these stories, it would be that no matter what race, religion, or heritage a person may claim, there is individuality that may broaden another's knowledge.

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This response demonstrates depth of understanding with an insightful analysis that accepting others is important because it shows how the characters go beyond stereotypes and create new relationships. The student interweaves further analysis and strong, specific textual evidence from both selections to illustrate the previous stereotypes that Amir and Masud had and to document the abandonment of these stereotypes. The student also uses insightful analysis and meaningful textual evidence from both selections to describe and support the end results (becoming part of a community, developing a life-altering friendship) achieved through acceptance.

In both stories Amir and Moud are able to overcome preconceived ideas about other cultures to create new friendships. Amir and his neighbors initially shun Royce and "seemed relieved when he left the garden." But after recognizing how helpful he is, Royce becomes "trusted and liked." Amir no longer associates "young and black" with "rather dangerous" and most importantly, Amir himself is no longer seen as a dirty foreigner "but as an individual who 'felt part of a community.'" Moud hated America and everything about it. Even though Raymond and Masud share "hundreds of miles" with "their stories unfolding," Masud tells her "the people of Afghanistan do not want you here." However, through Raymond's sincere attempt to communicate with Moud and convince him that "contact with the West is now inevitable," he is able to see past his stereotypes of Americans and see Raymond as a friend. This acceptance is most obvious when Moud allows Raymond to "help the world know there is beauty and peace in Islam."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

The student skillfully interweaves strong, effective textual evidence with the thoughtful analysis that in both stories, acceptance is important because it results in overcoming preconceived notions about other cultures to create friendships.

Amir is a story set in Cleveland, "a city of immigrants" where it is the rule "to avoid contact" like "a million crabs living in a million crevices". Amir's neighborhood is brought together by a garden which gave "an excuse for breaking the rules and starting a conversation." It is in the garden through these "conversations that tied [them] together" that stereotypes were broken and the neighborhood accepted each other and became a community within a city. Long Road Home brings together a "devout muslim" and "an unveiled single western woman" who through learning about each other's cultures are able to accept one another and form a life altering friendship. To Masud, Raimondo is a "sin from a nation he loathed" who he "assumed would never understand his world". However, through weeks of traveling together and discussing topics such as the "teachings of Islam" and the "rampant materialism of US culture" the two are able to see past Muslim and American stereotypes and become "closest friend[s]."

Score Point: 3 – Exemplary

This student reveals a thorough understanding of the significance of acceptance in the two selections. In "Amir" the student combines analysis with relevant quotes to illustrate how the garden breaks down the normal routine of avoidance in the city and brings the different cultures together. The student proceeds with this insightful approach in "Long Road Home" to show how two people who appear to be extreme opposites, a devout Muslim man and an unveiled Western woman, form a life-altering friendship by breaking through their preconceived notions of one another.